

Eagles taking 48-game streak to Mississippi

Written by Jim Ecker
Friday, 10 May 2013 21:09 -

Awesome. Phenomenal. Sensational.

Go ahead and pick a superlative, because they all fit the incredible Kirkwood Community College softball team.

The third-ranked Eagles spanked Dawson Community College (Mont.), 12-0, in the district finals Friday and will take their 48-game winning streak to the NJCAA Division II national tournament in Clinton, Miss., next week.

Conference champs. Regional champs. District champs.

National champs?

"I think we have the team that can take it," declared KCC Coach Joe Yegge, who led the Eagles to a seventh-place finish in 2011. "I think we have the talent to do it.

"If our girls stay relaxed, like they came out today, I think we can win the thing."

The Eagles (55-3) have not lost a game since March 18. They breezed through the ICCAC conference race with a 28-0 record, won four straight games in the regional meet and demolished the competition in the district tournament.

Next stop: Mississippi.

"I've heard it's going to be warm, so that's good," said Kirkwood ace Amber Logemann, who raised her record to 25-3 Friday. "I love warm weather."

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Yegge wants his players to have fun and enjoy the moment at the national tournament, which will be held next Wednesday through Saturday.

The Eagles sure had fun Friday in their 12-0 victory, capped when Shelby Crist rubbed a gooey cupcake in Kristen Winter's face while Winter was doing a TV interview.

"It feels so good to be a part of this team," said Crist, a speedy centerfielder and expert slap hitter from Cedar Rapids Prairie. "It's meant the world to me."

Crist said Prairie won six games when she was a senior. Kirkwood has won 55, tying the school record. "I've been so fortunate to play with such a good team," she said.

Kelsie Campbell played small ball and long ball for the Eagles Friday. She executed a perfect suicide squeeze in first inning, slugged a two-run homer in the second inning and delivered an RBI single in the sixth.

"It's awesome," said Campbell, the Kirkwood first baseman. "I've been in kind of a slump, so it's good to come out of it and drive in those runs."

"I've never played on a team like this," she said. "I love them all. We've all had a great time this season."

Kirkwood defeated Dawson 13-2 on Friday, so the visitors from Montana needed two victories over the Eagles on Friday to win the district title. They never had a chance.

Kirkwood scored five runs in the first inning and scored five more in the second for an imposing 10-0 lead. The rest of the game was academic.

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Hayley Krack hit a three-run homer in the first inning, giving her 19 homers and 70 RBIs this season. It was the 100th home run of the season for the Eagles, snapping the school record of 99 set last year, and Campbell's roundtripper made it 101.

The Eagles will be headed to Mississippi with some gaudy statistics. Kayla Tatge leads the nation with 25 homers, Logemann leads the nation in strikeouts and earned run average, and the Eagles lead the nation as a team in home runs.

"It's just crazy to be on this team," said Logemann, who has struck out 319 batters in 160.1 innings. "We're so together. We love each other, so that helps a lot.

"It's a really good team and I love playing with them and I love being here."

Iowa State coaches watched Logemann pitch on Thursday and the Iowa Hawkeyes were in town Friday. She has several offers from Division I schools, but will wait until after the national tournament to take her visits and make a decision.

"I wanted to play Division I, but I didn't know if I would be good enough," she said. "It's pretty cool."

Kirkwood will leave Monday for Mississippi. There will be 16 teams in the national tournament, which will be double-elimination.

Yegge expects Phoenix College and LSU Eunice to get the top seeds, but thinks Kirkwood could be seeded No.3. Phoenix won the 2012 national title and has won multiple NJCAA crowns. LSU Eunice is currently ranked No.1 in the country and won the national title in 2011.

"If we're relaxed, we'll play with anybody," said Yegge. "If we're tense, it's going to be a

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dogfight."

Yegge told his players how proud he is of their accomplishments, warned them to celebrate modestly Friday night and gave them the day off on Saturday.

He told them to enjoy the moment and look forward to Mississippi.

"It means so much," Winter said after wiping most of the cupcake off her face. "These are two years that I'll never ever forget in my life. I couldn't have picked a better team to do it with.

"We've worked so hard, and I'm so excited for them."

DAWSON (0): Murray, lf, 3 0 0 0, Taylor, ss/p, 3 0 2 0, Mitchell, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Aiken, p/ss, 3 0 0 0, Nedens, 1b, 3 0 2 0, Wallace, dp, 3 0 0 0, Meilleur, c, 1 0 0 0, Jackson, c, 2 0 0 0, Robinson, cf, 3 0 0 0, Lake, rf, 2 0 0 0, Miller, 3b, 0 0 0 0. Totals 26 0 4 0.

KIRKWOOD (12): Duffe, ss, 4 1 2 1, Winter, 2b, 2 2 1 0, Compton, ph, 1 0 0 0, Tatge, rf, 3 0 1 0, McInerney, ph, 1 1 1 0, Krack, 3b, 3 2 2 3, Boehm, ph, 1 1 1 0, Smith, dp, 2 2 1 1, Saladino, dp, 0 0 0 1, Tutsch, c, 2 2 1 1, Listenbee, ph, 0 0 0 0, Sales, lf, 4 0 1 0, Campbell, 1b, 3 1 2 4, Crist, cf, 2 0 0 0, Weber, ph, 1 0 1 0, Logemann, p, 0 0 0 0, Belz, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 29 12 13 11.

Dawson 000 000 0 - 0 4 2
Kirkwood 550 002 x - 12 14 2

Aiken, Taylor (3) and Meilleur, Jackson (4). Logemann, Belz (6) and Tutsch. W - Logemann (25-3). L - Aiken. 2B - McInerney. HR - Krack, Campbell.